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GOV. OTTER PROCLAIMS APRIL AS IDAHO SAFE DIGGING MONTH

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission, Idaho utilities remind local residents to call 811 before all digging projects

Boise, ID (March 26, 2014) — Idaho Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter is proclaiming April as Idaho Safe Digging Month. The proclamation reminds Idaho homeowners to call the national Call-Before-You-Dig number 811 at least 48 hours before starting any outdoor digging projects.

April marks the start of spring digging season. Utility companies, the Idaho Public Utilities Commission and Gov. Otter are encouraging homeowners to call 811 before they dig to prevent injuries, property damage and inconvenient outages. Digging damages a utility line once every three minutes nationwide. One-third of these incidents are caused by the failure to call 811 before beginning a digging project.

Idaho law requires that anyone planning excavation notify 811. Every digging project, no matter the size, necessitates a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, putting in a fence, building a deck and laying a patio are all examples of digging projects that need a call to 811 before starting.

If an underground facility must be located, personnel will be sent to mark the location with flags or spray paint at no cost to the requesting party. When calling 811, homeowners are connected to “Password” (Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Shoshone counties) or “Digline” (all other counties), which notifies the appropriate utility companies of the intent to dig.

“We join the governor in strongly encouraging individuals and companies to call 811 before they begin digging,” said Joe Leckie, administrator at the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. “By having underground lines marked, homeowners are making an important decision that can help keep them and their communities safe and connected.” Striking a single line can cause injury, repair costs, fines and inconvenient outages.

“It’s a free call and it’s a free service for excavators that can certainly prevent major problems for the homeowner and others,” said Paul Kjellander, president of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission.

In addition to the Governor’s Office and the PUC, other entities promoting Idaho Safe Digging Month include Avista Utilities, Intermountain Gas Co., Idaho Power Co., Rocky Mountain Power, CenturyLink, Cable One, United Water Idaho, Williams Pipeline, Tesoro, the Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities Association, Syringa Networks and Trans-Canada Pipeline.

Visit www.call811.com for more information about 811 and the call-before-you-dig process.

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